Nova Scotia
Department of Natural Resources

BUSINESS PLAN
2000-2001

Posted April 15, 2000.

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NOVA SCOTIA
Natural Resources

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1.0 Planning Context

The Department of Natural Resources was created in September 1991 as a result of a merger between the Department of Mines and Energy and the Department of Lands and Forests. An extensive strategic planning process started in July 1992 and culminated in a major departmental reorganization in March 1995. Smaller reorganizations also occurred in March 1996, with the creation of Corporate Service Units for financial, human resources and information technology services, and in November 1996, with the remaining other central services transferred within the Department. The Protected Areas Program was moved to Department of the Environment in October 1997 while the Petroleum Development Agency was removed from DNR in April 1998.

1.1 Departmental Scope

The following sections briefly describe the scope of the Department, and includes information on the Department's budget, employees, office locations, organization, and major clients, as well as the Department's core business functions.

1.1.1 Budget

The Department's 2000-2001 gross budget, including capital, is $55.1 million (1999-2000 was $59.6 million). The net program expenditure estimate (after chargeables, fees and recoveries) is $52.1 million (down 8% from $56.7 in 1999-2000).

The Department's budget has been reduced significantly from previous years. In 1994-1995 an internal review resulted in a total restructuring of the department that was necessary to address changing expectations and financial restraint. DNR's net program expenditures in 1994-1995 was $72.7 million. In 2000-2001 the equivalent figure is $52.1 million. This represents a reduction of just under $21 million, or 28% in available budget.

1.1.2 Employees

The total number of funded staff in 2000-2001 is 860 full-time equivalents (FTE). This is a reduction of 8% from 932 in 1999-2000. The number of FTE in 1994-1995 was 1,029. The formation of the CSU in 1996 increased the departmental FTE count by 50 additional employees as the Department absorbed staff from other departments in the areas of Finance, Human Resources and Information Technology. Including CSU staff, the Department's FTE count fell 20% from 1994-1995 to 2000-2001.

1.1.3 Locations

DNR's head office in Halifax houses approximately 220 staff, including senior management, administrative staff and most program development staff, except Wildlife Division (Kentville), Forestry Division (Truro and Shubenacadie) and Parks and Recreation Division (Belmont). Programs are delivered through a network of regional offices located throughout the province (see Appendix 1).

The Department operates an air fleet of five helicopters and one fixed wing aircraft and the integrated mobile radio system, which serve the entire provincial government.

DNR operates 128 parks throughout the province, 22 of which provide overnight camping; a wildlife park in Shubenacadie; a forest nursery in Strathlorne; a tree breeding centre in Debert; and a drill core library in Stellarton.

1.1.4 Organization

The Department's resources are organized into four branches and a Planning Secretariat (an organization chart is shown in Appendix 2). The Resources Corporate Services Unit (CSU) provides financial, human resources and information technology related services to DNR, as well as the Departments of Agriculture and Marketing, Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Emergency Measures Organization and Petroleum Directorate.

The Renewable Resources Branch coordinates and provides leadership on policy, planning and program development, including industry development and resource promotion, marketing, resource inventories and research, and prepares strategies and plans for the integrated development, management and conservation of the province's forest, park and wildlife resources. The Branch also operates the Strathlorne Forest Nursery, the Debert Tree Breeding Centre, the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park and is responsible for the provincial forest inventory and coordination of forest protection programs.

The Minerals and Energy Branch implements policies and programs dealing with the exploration, development, management and efficient use of mineral and energy resources. The Branch promotes scientific understanding of the geology of Nova Scotia for use by industry, government and the public and provides a mineral rights tenure system that establishes legal rights to minerals for exploration and development. The Branch also promotes the concepts of environmental responsibility and sustainable development/stewardship of mineral and energy resources and integrated resource planning.

The Regional Services Branch delivers department programs and services through a network of field offices. These programs and services include forest and wildlife management; Crown lands surveys; regional geology; extension and education; enforcement; forest fire prevention, detection and suppression; monitoring of forest insects and diseases; operating and maintenance of provincial parks; and resource conservation.

The Land Services Branch provides Crown land related services and administers approximately 20 statutes. These services include operation of the Crown Lands Records Centre, land acquisition and disposal and leasing and claims related to Crown land, and coordination of Crown land surveys.

The Planning Secretariat provides planning and policy coordination support to the Deputy Minister and the Department. Staff ensure that policies and plans developed within and across the Department are coordinated, support the integrated management of our natural resources, and are compatible with and support the strategic direction of government. The Planning Secretariat also provides a range of administrative, planning, research, information management and distribution, graphics, cartographic, and communication services.

1.1.5 Clients

The Department serves a wide range of clients throughout industry, government and the public. The major clients include:

NS government depts.
other provincial governments
forestry industry
mining industry
tourism industry
students (education system)
public
hunters
environmental groups
native groups and individuals
community development groups
municipal governments
recreational organizations
federal government
other Crown land users

1.1.6 Core Business Functions

The Department's responsibilities are administered through five core business functions:

resource management;
resource protection;
data gathering and analysis;
legislation and policy development; and
information and technology transfer.

1.2 Current Planning Environment

The following section describes the major Departmental challenges during the upcoming year. A detailed description of the Department's major programs is found in Section 6.0.

1.2.1 Major Departmental Challenges

Maintaining Departmental Infrastructure - The Department relies on a range of assets, including its vehicle fleet, aircraft and radio system, to safely and effectively operate. The Department also provides a system of parks for public use. The need to meet budgetary challenges during the last six years has resulted in a deferral of infrastructure maintenance and postponed asset replacement.

Implementing the New Approach to Sustainable Forests - The long term survival of our forest industries depends on a sustainable supply of wood fibre from both Crown and private lands. Adequate levels of investment in forest management activities and more efficient utilization of the resource are required. The Department is currently implementing initiatives which will both increase the level of forest management and silviculture activities and ensure that forest harvesting is carried out in a manner which will guarantee the protection of the environment, including wildlife and their habitats. This new approach requires that the forest industry and landowners assume responsibility for appropriate forest management activities to ensure sustainability of harvests. Departmental responsibilities under the new approach are shifting towards regulation, monitoring, education and awareness activities and communication of the responsibilities of all parties. This change in focus will require adjustments by both staff and the industry. A healthy forest will provide many recreational and environmental benefits, serve as a home for many species of wildlife, and contribute to making Nova Scotia a desirable place to live and do business.

Integrated Resource Management Planning - Nova Scotia has one of the lowest proportions of Crown land ownership of any province in the country. Demands on our lands and natural resources usually exceed availability and, as a result, the Department must balance the demands of many competing interests for land access and/or resource use. The Department is continuing to develop

integrated resource management plans that respect and integrate the management objectives for each of the Province's resources. These plans identify the best strategy for the management and use of Crown lands in order to provide social and economic benefits to Nova Scotians, while maintaining biodiversity and preventing adverse environmental effects. As part of the integrated resource management planning process, the Department must explain how the process works and how scientific research as well as other considerations are used to reach decisions that strike an appropriate balance between competing interests. When making decisions, the Department must consider the needs of all Nova Scotians as well as interest groups and use a consistent, open, transparent process to maintain public confidence that the Province's lands and natural resources are being managed properly.

Mi'kmaq Access to Natural Resources - Led by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Province is consulting with the Mi'kmaq community on the implications of the recent Marshall decision with respect to their treaty rights related to hunting and gathering. Clearly, development of acceptable regulations to ensure conservation and equitable access to all Nova Scotians will be a priority issue over the coming months. The Department will also continue to hold discussions with the First Nation people on issues related to their employment in the forest sector.

Climate Change - The climate change emission reduction agreement reached in Kyoto, Japan in December 1997 poses significant challenges for Canada. Climate change is a serious issue, both from an economic and an environmental perspective and will remain part of the public agenda for many years to come. The Province accepts the science of climate change and believes that it is prudent to take action while waiting for further detail on impacts. However, reducing emissions from fossil fuel use at a time when a major fossil fuel production facility is coming on stream could present economic development problems for Nova Scotia. Ensuring that provincial interests are adequately represented during national policy development so that Nova Scotia is not affected disproportionately to other provinces will also be a challenge. The Province believes that there are many cost effective options for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and that any emission reduction measures ultimately implemented should not hamper economic growth or job creation in Nova Scotia.

Cape Breton Development Corporation (CBDC) Mine Privatization - Discussions are underway with Natural Resources Canada and CBDC on several issues related to withdrawal of the federal government from coal mining.

Issues which must be satisfactorily addressed include:

preparation, by the Federal Government, of an environmental assessment and reclamation plan for CBDC facilities and lands;
development of a reclamation mining strategy for the Sydney Coalfield;
ways to enhance R&D and technology transfer related to remediation;
ways to provide benefits to industrial Cape Breton; and
pursuit of options to facilitate private sector operations of coal mines in the Donkin and Prince mine areas.

Information Technology Implementation - During 1999, a significant proportion of the Department's IT resources was devoted to dealing with the potential Year 2000 problem. As a result, there were no major new IT initiatives during the last year. Now that all outstanding issues related to Year 2000 have been resolved, the backlog of IT applications and hardware requirements will be addressed. The Department must also refocus resources to identify opportunities where IT can be used to reduce the cost of doing business, enhance revenue generation potential, improve client service, and provide a more efficient method of internal operation.

Implementing Change - The considerable amount of change expected from implementing the Province's new policy agenda will necessitate major efforts related to Human Resources management issues. Priority will be accorded to ensuring that contractual agreements are respected, and that any personnel changes and organizational restructuring are made taking into

consideration the principles of fairness and equity towards staff. Staff training requirements must be identified and training provided where staff can be reassigned. The transfer of corporate knowledge as staff retirements occur is another challenge that must be addressed.

2.0 Mission

To build a better future for Nova Scotians through responsible natural resources management.

3.0 Department Goals

Goal #1 - Achieve sound natural resources stewardship and sustainable development.

Goal #2 - Maintain the diversity of the province's natural environment.

Goal #3 - Enhance the economic base for jobs and incomes in Nova Scotia.

Goal #4 - Improve the quality of life for Nova Scotians.

Goal #5 - Ensure the effective use of our human and financial resources.

4.0 Core Business Functions

Resource Management

Issue rights for the use of Crown resources; maintain inventories of natural resources, including forests, wildlife and their habitats, sites and features of natural or recreational value, Crown land holdings, and mineral and energy resources; acquire and dispose of interests in Crown lands; manage forests on Crown land and encourage private landowners to practice good forest stewardship; provide outdoor recreational opportunities in provincial parks.

Resource Protection

Protect forests from fire, insects and disease.

Data Gathering and Analysis

Collect, analyze and interpret information to provide for good forest management practices and knowledge of wildlife populations, geological resources and resource use and production technologies.

Legislation and Policy Development

Develop and enforce policies and legislation relating to forest, wildlife and habitat, and mineral and energy resources and provincial parks, to ensure they are used sustainably.

Information and Technology Transfer

Inform and advise stakeholders on resource availability and use, market and development opportunities, and new technologies; inform, educate and consult the public on the management and use of natural resources.

5.0 Priorities For 2000-2001

For the 2000-2001 fiscal year, a number of priorities have been identified. The successful completion of these priorities will help the Department deal with the challenges described in Section 1.2.1. Key existing and planned linkages and/or partnerships with public and private sector organizations are highlighted for some of these priorities.

5.1 Natural Resources Stewardship and Sustainable Development

The Department will continue to implement programs designed to maintain the health and sustainability of the province's resources. A sound resource base will provide opportunities for economic development, as well as health and recreational benefits essential to our quality of life. The Department will:

Implement amendments to the Forests Act and new regulations to ensure Nova Scotia forests are sustainable. These provide for increased silviculture on private lands, better information on harvesting and production levels, and new management practices.

Wood buyers Forest industries Landowners

Provide provincial information for Canada's second report on the Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management in Canada, which is being prepared under the auspices of the Canadian Council of Forestry Ministers (CCFM).

Initiate and coordinate joint stewardship agreements with industry and landowners that generate public and private funding for private land silviculture activities.

Work with Natural Resources Canada, other federal and provincial departments, and other coastal provinces towards the development of a regulatory regime for the recovery of sea floor mineral resources in the Nova Scotia offshore.

Natural Resources Canada Fisheries and Oceans Canada Environment Canada Dept. of the Environment Other provinces

Develop updated provincial energy and climate change strategies to guide decisions and actions that affect the future production and use of energy in the province.

Dept. of the Environment Natural Resources Canada Environment Canada Other provinces/territories Energy industries Public

Produce and release a Provincial State of the Forest report and assist with the second State of the Environment Report (for Nova Scotia) on land related matters. These reports provide a public reporting system that documents and evaluates the health of the forest and the environment and reports how they are being changed as a result of human activities.

Dept.of Fisheries & Aquaculture Dept. of Agriculture & Marketing Dept. of the Environment

Respond to information and research requests which result from the ongoing claims over aboriginal land and resources and the court cases involving these claims.

Continue to enforce compliance under the Wildlife Act, Beaches Act, Crown Lands Act, Forests Act, Trails Act, Parks Act, Wilderness Protection Act, and Angling Act, among others.

Continue implementing the action plan for the Province's mineral policy to ensure that the Department's programs are focused on supporting and encouraging economic development related to the use of our geological resources.

Implement the Nova Scotia Action Plan that adopts sustainable forest management and implements the updated National Forest Strategy. This Action Plan will meet the Province's commitment as a signatory to the second Canada Forest Accord.

Monitor wildlife populations to ensure that the principles of conservation and sustainable use are realized and evaluate the current system for harvesting moose in Cape Breton.

NS Hunter & Anglers Federation

Complete strategic land use plans for Crown lands using the integrated resource management planning process, and begin developing long range management plans that conform with these strategic plans.

Dept. of the Environment
Other provincial depts.
Municipalities
Communities
Aboriginal groups
Resource industries
Other resource users
Environmentalists
Public

5.2 Diversity of the Natural Environment

The Department will work to maintain a variety of plants, animals and other living organisms in all their forms and levels of organization, including genes, species, ecosystems and the processes that link them together. The Department will:

Continue programs, policy and legislation for the conservation of biodiversity, including implementation of the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk. This will be done by implementing the Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act, initiating recovery plans for endangered and threatened species, and reporting on the status of wildlife in Nova Scotia. A Species at Risk Working Group has been appointed, which will provide expert scientific information on animals, plants, and conservation biology, and will develop the province's list of endangered species.

Canadian Wildlife Service
Other Prov./Terr. Gov'ts
Wildlife Agencies
Resource Industries
Environmentalists
Naturalists

Provide a description of the province's ecological regions to guide ecologically based forest management by government and industry. This is consistent with the National Forest Accord and forms the basis for the Department's Integrated Resource Management initiative.

Dept. of the Environment
Forest land owners

Participate in the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture, the Black Duck Joint Venture and the Sea Duck Joint Venture as part of Nova Scotia's commitment to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

Canadian Wildlife Service
Wildlife Habitat Canada
Ducks Unlimited Canada
U.S. Partners

Monitor forest conditions and threats to the forest (fire, insects and disease), and implement suitable strategies to protect the province's forest resources.

Forestry Industries
Volunteer Fire Depts.
Natural Resources Canada
Canadian Forestry Service

Initiate a comprehensive review of the Beaches Act to develop recommended amendments to this legislation. The Departments of Natural Resources and the Environment will undertake the review jointly.

5.3 An Economic Base for Jobs and Incomes

The Department will continue to support the responsible development of natural resource based industries by encouraging a competitive business climate supported by effective policies and regulations for the management and use of the province's natural resources. The Department will:

Implement multi-disciplinary geoscience programs and undertake targeted promotion of the province's mineral resources to increase the level of exploration and work cooperatively with industry, other departments and community development groups to encourage appropriate development opportunities.

Foreign and domestic mining companies
Dept. of the Environment
Dept. of Labour
Community Development Groups
Geological Survey of Can.
Bedford Institute

Work with the federal government to encourage appropriate taxation and expenditure policies that provide a business climate conducive to natural resources industries.

Jointly with Aboriginal Affairs, continue discussions with Mi'kmaq representatives about access to Crown lands for hunting and gathering activities as referenced in the recent court decision concerning treaty rights.

Encourage appropriate private sector development of natural resources on Crown lands while ensuring it is done in a responsible and environmentally sound manner that preserves the ecological integrity, recreational opportunities and sustainable resource use. This includes forest harvesting and silviculture, development of peatland and aggregate resources, general recreational activities, and the sale, trade or acquisition of Crown lands.

Work with officials from the Cape Breton Development Corporation (CBDC), the federal government and other provincial departments to encourage the continuation of coal mining in Cape Breton as feasible, and to provide for satisfactory remediation of lands affected by coal mining within the boundary of the CBDC.

Natural Resources Canada
Environment Canada
Dept. of the Environment
CBDC

Provide assistance to resource industries through efforts to promote NS resources, identify value added opportunities and provide technical support to small businesses including woodlot owners, sawmills and prospectors.

Help to promote Nova Scotia as a premier trails destination offering opportunities to experience our outstanding natural environment and strengthen our position as a coastal tourism destination.

Sport and Recreation Commission Tourism and Culture

5.4 Quality of Life

Maintain and operate park facilities and maintain park and trail infrastructure.

Municipal governments Communities Regional Development Authorities Sport and Recreation Commission N.S. Trails Federation

Continue the development of a Forest Practices Code, which promotes sustainable forestry, integrated resource management, biodiversity and ecosystem based management, for use on Crown lands, and which can be used as a model by private land owners.

Initiate a program to reclaim abandoned mine openings on Crown land and provide information and advice on abandoned mines to private landowners.

Private landowners Housing and Municipal Affairs

In conjunction with the federal government, develop and implement cost-effective energy efficiency and alternative energy programs that help meet Canada's international commitments to reduce greenhouse gases.

Dept. of the Environment Environment Canada Natural Resources Canada

Work with the Department of Housing and Municipal Affairs to rationalize and improve the collection of information on non-resident land ownership.

5.5 Effective Use of Financial and Human Resources

The Department will focus on core functions, and encourage resource sector industries to move toward self-sufficiency. The department will continue to improve the efficiency of its internal operations, and investigate and adopt new ways of doing business in order to provide taxpayers with value for their money. The Department will:

Realign its expenditures to maintain efforts devoted to programs supporting resource management and sustainable use, while reducing expenditures on administrative and other internal support operations and services where the private sector is able to take the initiative.

Focus efforts on establishing standards, providing information and monitoring compliance, recognizing that industry can make its own decisions about the means to reach those standards. The department will maintain direct investment funding to the forest industry, and ensure it is used to increase the level of forest management and silviculture activities by the private sector.

Identify and adopt opportunities where information technology can be used to reduce the cost of doing business or improve client service. This includes expanding the distribution of information by e-mail and on the Internet, and integrating information from various geographic information system databases within the department.

Identify and implement opportunities for efficiencies and improved service delivery through partnerships with, or purchases from, other departments or the private sector.

Continue to develop and implement a comprehensive Occupational Health and Safety program to ensure workplaces meet or exceed regulatory requirements and provide a healthy and safe working environment for staff.

Implement any changes in accordance with contractual agreements, taking into consideration the principles of fairness and equity towards staff. Staff training requirements will be identified and training provided where staff can be reassigned.

Continue to facilitate efficient and effective reviews of mineral development projects through a coordinated "one-window" process, including the provision of scientific, technical and policy advice to other departments that are partners in the Memorandum of Understanding. The MOU will be revised to reflect the amendments made to the Mineral Resources Act so that changes in relationships between partners and shifts in responsibilities are fully recognized and implemented.

Dept. of the Environment
Dept. of Labour

6.0 Budgeting Context

The Department's 2000-2001 gross expenditure target is $55.1 million, including capital, and $55.0 million, excluding capital. The Department's 2000-2001 net expenditure target, including capital, is $52.1, and $52.0, excluding capital. Salaries make up 68% of the Department's $52.1 of net program expenditures.

The cost of dealing with the Year 2000 problem, was satisfied last year by deferring purchases from existing budgets. For the 2000-2001 fiscal year funding was reallocated to the programs that suffered reductions to meet the unusual fiscal demands presented by Y2K.

6.1 Private Land Forest Management

The Private Land Forest Management Program provides support for forest management activities on private lands. This includes funding for silvicultural activities, technical and professional assistance to private landowners on silviculture and other aspects of forest management planning, support for construction of forest access roads, and monitoring for compliance with Acts and regulations related to forest harvesting and forest management. Although the newly amended Forests Act places greater responsibility on those who generate demand for wood fibre, e.g. the forest industry, continuing government funding for private land forest management activities is necessary to supplement private funds until the transition is completed.

At present, a major cost element is funds for silviculture. Funding has fallen from more than ten million dollars seven years ago to three million dollars this year. Government funding leverages private sector funds at a ratio of three to one. This is a strategic investment in a traditional industry that is a major source of employment in rural Nova Scotia, including Cape Breton. It contributes to a secure, self-reliant and sustainable future for Nova Scotians. It has been estimated, that every one million dollars of silviculture activity represents the equivalent of 30 full time jobs.

The other major program cost is salaries. The new forest strategy will require DNR staff to monitor compliance with wood acquisition plans, reporting and harvesting practice regulations. This will place additional pressure on field staff that must be met with the current staffing level.

6.2 Crown Land Resources Management

The Crown Land Resources Management Program includes approving, monitoring and enforcing forest harvesting and silviculture activities on Crown lands in accordance with the Provincial Forestry Acts, Regulations, guidelines, policy and any long term land use plans and strategies. Funds are provided to meet contractual commitments for silviculture to enhance forest productivity and to maintain woodland access road infrastructure. When fully funded, the program ensures an increased sustainable supply of wood fibre from Crown lands, which presently produce roughly 10 percent of the total provincial industrial harvest.

Funds for management activities on Crown lands have fallen significantly from the early 1990s and, due to a diversion of dollars in 1998 to the forest protection program, there is now a cumulative backlog of required silviculture.

The Crown Land Resources Management Program also manages requests for the use of peat land and aggregate resources, monitors the conduct of general recreational activities on Crown land, makes recommendations on proposed sales, trades or acquisitions of Crown lands and evaluates the construction of structures on Crown lands. Authorizations are recommended for Ministerial approval as appropriate.

6.3 Land Services

The Land Services Program encompasses the acquisition, leasing and disposal of interests in Crown lands, co-ordination of government surveying requirements and maintenance of Crown lands records and the Crown lands GIS cadastral database. In addition it provides land related services to other departments such as land administration and designations. A very limited capital budget supports land acquisition.

In addition, reduced staff levels, according to early retirement guidelines, have resulted in a large backlog of land administration matters which, despite efforts to streamline and increase efficiency, remains significant. This causes delays in meeting client needs. There is a large, and unfunded liability to meet legislated obligations to replace Crown lands removed from forest management agreements for other needs, including natural gas pipeline corridors and the creation of 31 Wilderness Protection Areas. There is constant pressure to purchase additional lands for protection and recreational purposes. Research in support of government's response to aboriginal claims to land and resources promises to continue to increase into the foreseeable future and resolution of any of these issues will require increased land administration effort. Requests to access Crown lands for natural gas distribution systems will also result in increased workloads.

6.4 Forest Protection

This area develops and operates programs designed to protect Nova Scotia forests from fire, insects and disease. The budget level is set to meet minimum average protection requirements. Overruns are inevitable if there is a bad fire season or a major increase in insect infestations.

Last year, extremely hazardous fire causing increased fire activity resulted in considerable budget pressures for the Department. Effective coordination of the department's resources with the assistance of volunteer fire departments throughout the province, minimized fire size and forest damage. The Department is monitoring insect infestation levels for several species of insects. The health of our forests depends on adequate levels of protection.

6.5 Forestry

The Forestry Program funds forest management research, development of strategies for sustainable forests, maintenance of the provincial forest inventory, the production of data concerning forest resources and roundwood scaling, and the coordination of forestry extension programs and support for industry development. It also includes operational funding for the Strathlorne Forest Nursery and the Debert Tree Breeding Centre.

Forest inventory and forest research activities are the largest budget items, and these expenditures are largely associated with permanent full time staff salaries. The recent amendments to the Forests Act, which include the implementation of requirements for wood acquisition plans and a code of practice, will lead to an even greater reliance on research and forest inventory work.

The Nursery depends on revenue from the sale of seedlings for a large portion of its funding. Funding levels for this program have decreased due to reduced staffing levels (ERIP). The Nursery supports both a business and social objective (100 jobs during the peak operating season in an area of extremely high unemployment).

6.6 Minerals and Energy

The Minerals and Energy Program implements policies and programs dealing with exploration, development, management, and utilization of energy and mineral resources. It funds geological studies that promote an understanding of provincial geology, document the province's mineral endowment, define the potential for new mineral resources, and provide needed information for environmental, land use, and other purposes. The program administers mineral royalties and operates a tenure system for mineral rights. On the energy side, it develops policy and strategies for downstream energy use, and takes a leadership role, with Department of the Environment, in the Province's participation in the National Climate Change process. It also leads the development of the provincial climate change strategy and a new provincial energy strategy, and operates programs to encourage demand side energy conservation and efficiency.

As budgets have been reduced over the past six years, the program has been forced to cut most non-staff expenses. Other funding pressures include reclamation liabilities related to public safety concerns around abandoned mines (including expenses related to the continuing responsibilities for the Westray mine site which the Department has maintained for the past seven years), the need to ensure that environmental remediation of DEVCO lands is carried out to the satisfaction of the Province, as required under the Mineral Resources Act.

Related to energy programs are budget pressures that result from increased travel and staffing time required due to the Province's participation in climate change activities, the future requirement for program money to carry out any commitments that Nova Scotia may make to reduce greenhouse gas emissions affecting the climate change process, and missed opportunities if the Province is unable to participate fiscally in predominantly federally-funded programs related to greenhouse gas reductions.

6.7 Wildlife Management

The Wildlife Management Program includes research, development and delivery of programs for the management and conservation of the province's wildlife resources and their habitats, including endangered species initiatives.

Budget levels and staffing have been reduced through early retirement while program demands have continued to increase. Under the new Endangered Species Act, a Species at Risk Working Group has been appointed, consisting of scientific experts on animals, plants and conservation biology. This working group will be responsible for developing the province's list of endangered

species. Existing staff and resources will be used to implement the requirements under the Act, including requirements to prepare and implement recovery plans for designated species.

6.8 Enforcement

This program supports the ongoing development, coordination and operation of a departmental resource law enforcement and compliance program which also provides enforcement services to the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and the protected areas program within the Department of the Environment. Enforcement resources have remained static while program demands have increased with openings of additional parks, the new Forest Strategy, and implementation of a protected areas program.

6.9 Fleet Services

The Fleet Services Program funds the maintenance and replacement of a fleet of approximately 700 highway and other specialized vehicles (i.e., fire trucks, enforcement vehicles), as well the operation, maintenance and replacement of a small fleet of aircraft, consisting of five helicopters and one fixed wing airplane. The road vehicles are heavily used in every aspect of the Department's program delivery, from fire suppression, enforcement, personal transport to heavy equipment. The aircraft are used for forest fire detection and suppression, ground search and rescue, natural resource management, and transportation. Of the total hours flown annually, approximately 30 percent are on behalf of external departments and agencies. A portion of this expense is recovered from those departments.

Fleet replacement (both road vehicles and aircraft) has been deferred for several years due to budget constraints. Road vehicles are now older and in need of increased maintenance. Ideally, replacement of light vehicles should occur on a five year cycle and the heavy equipment (more than one ton) on a cycle of ten years. Similarly, the air fleet requires replacement to avoid the costs of increased maintenance. The replacement cycle for the heavily used smaller helicopters is approximately every five years. Both of the fleet replacement plans have been realigned due to the budget constraints.

6.10 Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Program supports the planning, development and operation of the 128 camping and day-use parks, in addition to trails and other outdoor recreational opportunities and facilities on Crown and private lands.

6.11 Integrated Mobile Radio System

This program funds the operation of a mobile radio system providing 7 / 24 communications for various government departments and agencies, fire departments and the RCMP. The system also provides backup to the Emergency Health System, hospitals, and ambulances. Various other affiliated users (e.g., Nova Scotia Power Inc, Stora, Bowaters) are also housed on part of the system.

The radio system is currently undergoing a conversion to an Integrated Wide Area Network (IWAN) system expected to come on line in June 2000. The current system will be required to run concurrently with the IWAN due to unexpected delays and unforseen problems with the implementation and technical capability.

6.12 Resources Corporate Services Unit

This program provides human resources, information technology and financial support services to the Departments of Natural Resources, Agriculture and Marketing, Fisheries and Aquaculture and Environment, as well as the Petroleum Directorate and Emergency Measures Organization.

Programs delivered by Information Technology staff include network and computer hardware support and the development of business solutions to departmental issues. The intense focus on Year 2000 remediation during 1999-2000 has resulted in a backlog of software and hardware application projects for the Information Technology Division. Beginning in 2000-2001, the department will identify, develop and implement IT solutions to support program priorities.

Human Resource programs cover a broad range including the provision of payroll and benefit administration and design and delivery of quality, cost-effective training for staff. Support programs include providing advice and assistance regarding Occupational Health and Safety, and the coordination of a Performance Management Program for the department. Management of human resource issues will require considerable effort over the next few years as changes occur in contractual agreements and departmental priorities reflecting the government's new agenda. The emphasis will be on change management, retraining and transition management.

Financial Services is responsible for the payment of accounts, management of accounts receivable, provision of financial data and budget coordination. Within the area of financial management, the focus will be on the delivery of corporate programs such as the Tangible Capital Assets Program. Other financial concerns will deal with the development of policies relating to debit and credit card use and the tendering process. The financial program will also undertake to produce quarterly reports containing detailed comparative analysis of fiscal data.

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